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Atlanta's 'Phantom of the Fox' Wonders if He Has to Move Out

Posted By - [Marc Pickard](#)

Last Updated On: 8/31/2010 5:41:25 PM



ATLANTA -- The relationship between Joe Patten, otherwise known as the Phantom of the Fox, and his landlords, otherwise known as the board of trustees for the [Fox Theatre](#), has degenerated into an emotional standoff.

Patten, who has lived in an apartment above the Fox for the last 31 years, was presented with a new lease arrangement by the board on Monday -- and, on advice of his lawyer, refused to sign.

Patten is not sure what's next.

A poster made by an 11-year-old girl rests on a couch in Joe Patten's living room in his apartment above the Fox. It pleads with the Fox board to let the Phantom of the Fox stay.

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"I feel very, very invigorated," said Patten. "It appears to me that I had more support than I ever thought I would ever have."

Still, Joe Patten is sad and disappointed that after 31 years of living rent free in his Fox apartment according to the original lease, Patten believes the theater board is trying to find a way to squeeze him out.

"They need the space," Patten said. "And I think there's a greater reason that for some reason or another they resent my operation here in the building."

Patten says the new lease agreement includes conditions and exclusions that would make it difficult, if not impossible for him to continue to live in the apartment with his health.

A spokesperson for the Fox says Joe is welcome to live in the apartment for as long as he is able -- but that it is a theater not designed for elder care.

"I thought I'd die in here," said Patten. "And that was the end of that. But to have to be put out was a real shocking experience."

Joe Patten has a warehouse where he can store all his furnishings, but right now, he has no other place to live. He might have to decide 90 days from now -- around Thanksgiving.